medicines, ancient Indian knowledge and practices like Yoga, during the years 2005, 2006 and till 30th June 2007;

(b) the steps that have been taken by Government to stop this violation of our age-old ethos and forest based treasure either through diplomatic channels or recourse of legal action; and

(c) the number of such patents that have been cancelled during this period?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The US Patent and Trade Office (USPTO) have not granted any patent on Yoga postures or practice *per se*. The USPTO have granted 168 patents to date on devices and equipment that may be used in conjunction with Yoga. Twelve patents, which specifically indicate that they are in respect of traditional Indian herbal knowledge, have been assigned to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi.

(b) to (c) As no patents have been granted specifically on Yoga, the matter has not been taken up with the US authorities. The general issue of traditional knowledge is on the agenda of the Indo-US Intergovernmental Trade Policy Forum.

Welfare fund in UAE

1907. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to establish a welfare fund in UAE for the Indian communities living there;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether such types of facilities are given in other countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b): Government proposes to establish a Welfare Fund for the Indian Overseas Workers in general. The details are being finalized.

(c) and (d) Welfare funds for overseas workers exist in other labour sending countries such as the Philippines, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. These Funds are utilized for various welfare services to the overseas workers and returnees.

BSUP and IHSDP

1908. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is implementing Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP) and Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) schemes in the country to provide houses to the urban poor;

(b) if so, whether the proposal of the State Government of Andhra Pradesh to provide sanction to additional one lakh houses under the above schemes has been approved;